

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A neutral, aqueous soluble  $\beta$ -glucan preparation which enhances host defense mechanisms to infection and does not induce an inflammatory response.
- 5 2. An underivatized, aqueous soluble  $\beta$ -glucan composition in a triple helix conformation which enhances host immune defense mechanisms without inducing detrimental side effects.
3. An underivatized, aqueous soluble  $\beta$ -glucan composition in a triple helix conformation having a high affinity to the glucan receptor on monocytes and  
10 which enhances microbicidal activity of phagocytic cells and the hemopoietic activity of monocytes, neutrophils and platelets.
4. An underivatized, aqueous soluble  $\beta$ -glucan composition in a triple helix conformation which is effective in mobilizing the hosts normal immune defenses.